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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 003404

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#)  
SUBJECT: ONGOING GRP EFFORTS ON EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

REF: A. MANILA 3346  
[B](#). MANILA 3247  
[C](#). MANILA 3202  
[D](#). MANILA 2636

[1](#)1. Summary. In response to a deadline from President Arroyo to solve at least ten cases of extrajudicial killings (EJKs) before October 15, Task Force Usig of the Philippine National Police (PNP) held its first monthly "multisectoral meeting" with NGO, media, church, and community leaders on August 10, and separately briefed Pol/C. The PNP claimed to have "solved" two cases, but there have been at least 11 new killings since the formation of TF Usig in May. There is broad agreement on the need for new efforts to improve rewards and witness protection procedures, as well as to expedite court proceedings, but adequate funding will be a problem. On August 13, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) tied the New People's Army (NPA) to the increased EJKs by revealing the contents of the so called "Bushfire" documents, which allegedly contain a directive from the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) to the NPA to purge its ranks of informants and other "disloyals." End Summary.

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Task Force Usig Reaches out to Community Leaders  
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[1](#)2. As she had indicated to A/S Hill during their July 31 meeting (ref C), President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo publicly set a deadline for the PNP to "solve" at least ten cases of extrajudicial killings (EJKs), accompanied by the filing of at least ten cases. Contrary to her initial plans for a one month deadline, however, she lengthened this to 10 weeks, which will expire on October 15.

[1](#)3. In order to promote greater cooperation and improve effectiveness, the PNP convened the first in what it hopes will be monthly "multisectoral meetings" with representatives from leftist groups, other NGOs, the media, the clergy, the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Justice (DOJ), business groups, and EJK-affected communities on August 10. TF Usig Commander (and Deputy PNP Chief for Administration) General Avelino "Sonny" Razon, Jr. separately briefed Pol/C and poloff at our request on August 10 about this meeting and provided an update on TF Usig's activities since his last briefing (ref d). General Razon admitted that the meeting with civil society groups was lively, with many suggestions, inputs, and criticisms. He said there was broad consensus that the GRP needed to examine ways to improve PNP's meager rewards system and DOJ's witness protection program, both of which are poorly funded and little utilized. Responding to complaints about delays in the judicial process, a DOJ representative assured the group that DOJ would work to expedite court cases involving EJKs. General Razon explained that part of TF Usig's goal is to instill a greater sense of "civic responsibility" in order to encourage witnesses to come forward and testify. He also promised that the work and

findings of TF Usig would be transparent and promised "to show that our (PNP) records are open."

¶4. Since the creation of TF Usig, the PNP has "solved" two cases involving journalists, and charged the identified suspects, according to General Razon. Razon admitted, however, that these slayings appeared to be robbery-related rather than actual media-related EJKs. He predicted that TF Usig would solve another two cases within a week. He added that he would be setting targets for regional PNP units on numbers of cases to solve within the deadline as well. He noted a preponderance of cases in Central Luzon, the Visayas, and parts of Mindanao, which he attributed to a higher concentration of New People's Army units in those areas. He explained that TF Usig's crime and information management system was drawing up better maps indicating the place and time of the occurrence of EJKs so that the PNP could have a better handle on how to allocate its resources and set priorities to solve.

¶5. Additional actions that TF Usig has undertaken include:  
-- Planning a new re-registration program for all firearms by the end of 2006, under the direction of Secretary of Interior and Local Government Puno. PNP plans to use the fees from the re-registration to fund improvements in its database of EJKs cases, which is now already available to regional police headquarters and should eventually be accessible by provincial and local police as well;  
-- Improvements in the database of Warrants of Arrests from all courts;  
-- Greater coordination with the National Bureau of Investigation and consideration of inter-connectivity of its database of cases and suspects.

MANILA 00003404 002 OF 002

¶6. General Razon, admitted, however that at least 11 new cases of EJKs have taken place since the formation of TF Usig, while claiming that legal cases had been filed in five of these already. TF Usig has also continued its investigation into earlier cases (as described in ref d) and has been able to rule out some of these as EJKs, particularly those in which innocent civilians were killed in the course of "legitimate" AFP or PNP operations. The revised TF Usig statistics for the 2001-2006 period now show:

Party List Members:

-- 107 cases, with 28 so far in 2006;  
-- 35 cases have identified perpetrators or suspects; 20 are NPA-related, 15 are AFP or PNP-related;  
-- 27 cases have been filed in court, with arrests in three cases and surrenders in two cases, while suspects are still at large in 22 others;  
-- 80 cases are still under investigation.

Members of the Media:

-- 26 cases, with two so far in 2006;  
-- Nine cases have identified perpetrators who are AFP or PNP-related;  
-- 21 cases have been filed, with arrests in 10 of these cases, and 11 cases under preliminary investigation;  
-- In a May 22 slaying of a radio commentator and former vice mayor, one suspect is a police officer whom the PNP dismissed one day after charges were filed against him -- he is now in custody awaiting trial;  
-- Five cases are still under investigation.

¶7. General Razon insisted that the PNP would not trump up charges or bypass proper procedures in order to meet President Arroyo's deadline. He gave assurances that PNP remained committed to justice and to ensuring that TF Usig's handling of these cases would "build confidence" in the community.

18. General Razon confirmed media reports of the existence of the "Bushfire" documents, which the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) recovered on May 23 after an encounter with NPA forces in Tagcawayan, Quezon province. The documents contain apparent orders from the Communist Party of the Philippines to the NPA to purge its ranks of would-be informants. He speculated that this would account for some of the party list slayings.

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